

What I claim is:

1. A method for hydraulic fracturing of a formation around a wellbore, the wellbore having a volume, comprising:
  - (a) placing a volume of cross-linked fracturing fluid in the wellbore, the volume of the cross-linked fracturing fluid being less than the volume of the wellbore;
  - (b) displacing the cross-linked fracturing fluid down to a perforation in the casing by a displacement fluid; and
  - (c) applying pressure to the displacement fluid by pumping so as to inject the cross-linked fracturing fluid through the perforation into the formation to form a hydraulic fracture.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid has a viscosity greater than about 500 cP at a temperature of injection into the formation.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid has a viscosity greater than about 2,000 cP at a temperature of injection into the formation.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid has a viscosity greater than about 10,000 cP at a temperature of injection into the formation.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) is performed by placing the cross-linked fracturing fluid in the wellbore in the form of discrete volumes of fluid in a carrier fluid.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) is performed by placing the cross-linked fracturing fluid into a stream having a carrier fluid at a concentration such that the cross-linked fracturing fluid flows on a film of carrier fluid.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) is performed by placing the cross-linked fracturing fluid in the wellbore and allowing the fluid to fall by gravity down the wellbore.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the cross-linked fracturing fluid contains a proppant.
9. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step after step (b) of allowing a time for the cross-linked polymer to decrease in viscosity.
10. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of forming a hydraulic fracture in the formation around the wellbore and then performing steps (a) and (b) and injecting the cross-linked fracturing fluid into the hydraulic fracture before closure of the hydraulic fracture.
11. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of forming a hydraulic fracture in the formation around the wellbore and then performing steps (a) and (b) and injecting the cross-linked fracturing fluid into the hydraulic fracture after closure of the hydraulic fracture.
12. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of performing another operation in the wellbore after step (c) and before a time for the cross-linked fracturing fluid to degrade.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the other operation in the wellbore is gravel packing.
14. The method of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the cross-linked fracturing fluid contains a proppant.
15. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of transporting ball sealers down the wellbore along with or following the cross-linked fracturing fluid.
16. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid comprises a water-soluble polymer.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid is selected to exhibit syneresis.
18. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linking of the cross-linked fracturing fluid is delayed after a cross-linking material is added to the fluid.
19. The method of claim 1 wherein a surfactant or polymer is added to the cross-linked fracturing fluid to promote wall slip during flow of the cross-linked fracturing fluid.
20. The method of claim 6 wherein a surfactant or polymer is added to the carrier fluid to promote wall slip during flow of the cross-linked fracturing fluid.
21. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid is displaced from the wellbore by a fluid having a lower specific gravity than the specific gravity of the cross-linked fracturing fluid.
22. The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid occupies about 200 feet or less in the casing above the perforation.
23. The method of claim 1 wherein the volume of the cross-linked fracturing fluid is less than about 50 ft<sup>3</sup>.
24. The method of claim 1 wherein the volume of the cross-linked fracturing fluid is less than about 250 ft<sup>3</sup>.